

INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY/DISTRICT  
MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
INTERNAL NR-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW FORM

Property/District Name: Fair Hill Covered Bridge Survey Number: CE-238

Project: Rehabilitation of the Bridge Agency: DNR

Site visit by MHT Staff: no X yes Name LLB and CVD Date 07-31-91

Eligibility recommended x Eligibility not recommended       

Criteria: X A        B X C        D Considerations:        A        B        C        D        E        F        G        None

Justification for decision: (Use continuation sheet if necessary and attach map)

Constructed in the mid-nineteenth century, the Fair Hill Covered bridge is a fine representative of a Burr arch truss covered bridge, one of four remaining in Maryland. (Gilpin Falls, CE Co., Jerusalem HA Co., Utica Bridge, FR Co.) The most common covered bridge type in the nineteenth century, the Burr arch truss was patented in 1802 by Theodore Burr. The arch truss withstood greater loads and could accommodate wider spans than its wooden counterparts. The covered bridge has become extremely rare in Maryland today due to later technological advances in bridge design and materials, natural deterioration and human destruction. The Fair Hill Covered Bridge retains a high degree of integrity in its design, location, setting, workmanship still intact.

Documentation on the property/district is presented in: Maryland Inventory and the DNR historic sites survey, 1980

Prepared by: John Hnedak

Lauren L. Bowlin

Reviewer, Office of Preservation Services

February 14, 1992

Date

*R. Andrews* *NR agrees*

*18 Feb 92*

*gms*

## MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA - HISTORIC CONTEXT

## I. Geographic Region:

- ☒ Eastern Shore (all Eastern Shore counties, and Cecil)  
☐ Western Shore (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's and St. Mary's)  
☐ Piedmont (Baltimore City, Baltimore, Carroll, Frederick, Harford, Howard, Montgomery)  
☐ Western Maryland (Allegany, Garrett and Washington)

## II. Chronological/Developmental Periods:

- ☐ Paleo-Indian 10000-7500 B.C.  
☐ Early Archaic 7500-6000 B.C.  
☐ Middle Archaic 6000-4000 B.C.  
☐ Late Archaic 4000-2000 B.C.  
☐ Early Woodland 2000-500 B.C.  
☐ Middle Woodland 500 B.C. - A.D. 900  
☐ Late Woodland/Archaic A.D. 900-1600  
☐ Contact and Settlement A.D. 1570-1750  
☐ Rural Agrarian Intensification A.D. 1680-1815  
☒ Agricultural-Industrial Transition A.D. 1815-1870  
☐ Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930  
☐ Modern Period A.D. 1930-Present  
☐ Unknown Period ( ☐ prehistoric ☐ historic)

## III. Prehistoric Period Themes:

- ☐ Subsistence  
☐ Settlement  
☐ Political  
☐ Demographic  
☐ Religion  
☐ Technology  
☐ Environmental Adaption

## IV. Historic Period Themes:

- ☐ Agriculture  
☐ Architecture, Landscape Architecture, and Community Planning  
☐ Economic (Commercial and Industrial)  
☐ Government/Law  
☐ Military  
☐ Religion  
☐ Social/Educational/Cultural  
☒ Transportation

## V. Resource Type:

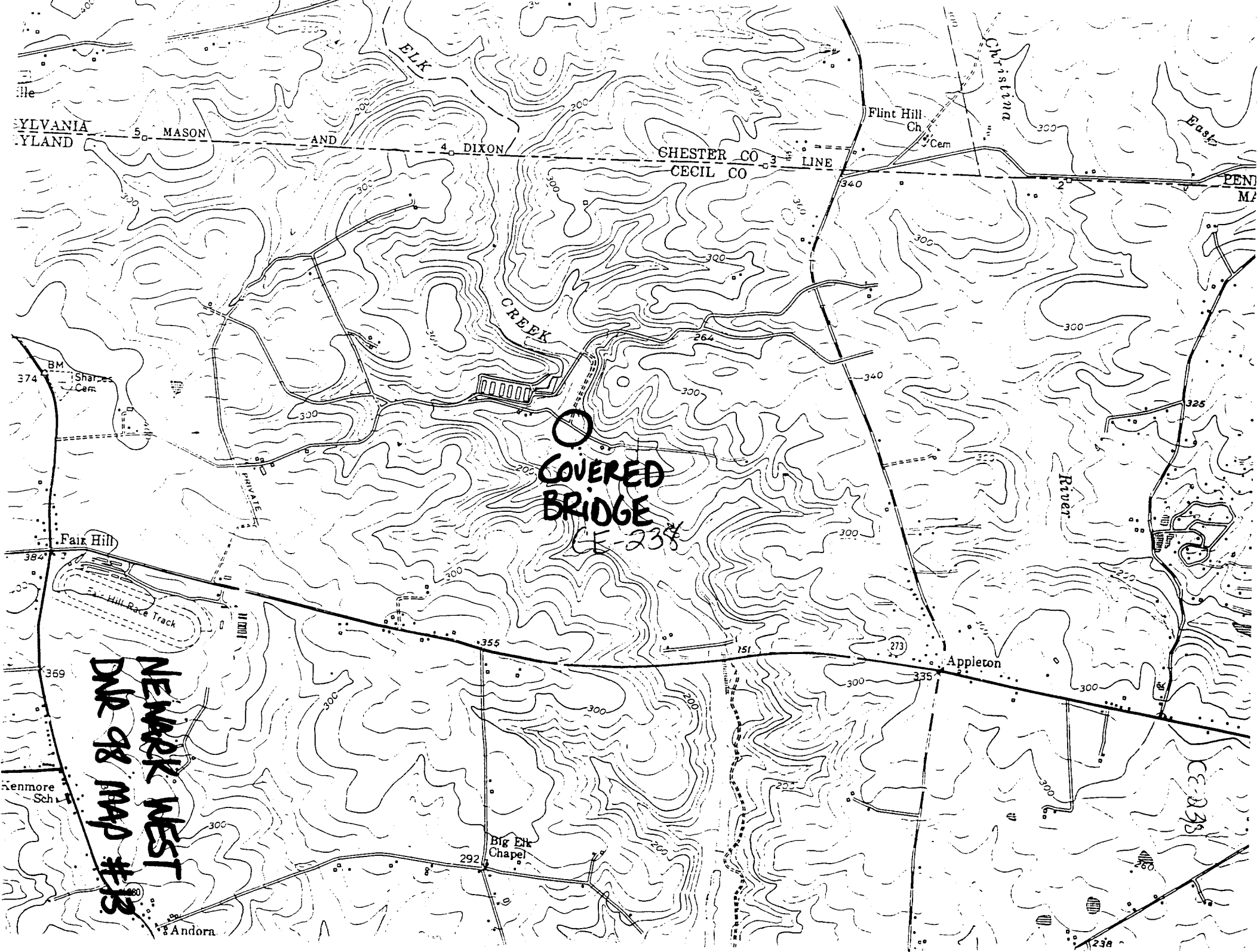
Category: StructureHistoric Environment: RuralHistoric Function(s) and Use(s): TransportationKnown Design Source: NA

Inventory Number: CE-238  
Covered Bridge on Big Elk Creek  
Cecil County, MD  
C. Mazurek  
June 1998  
Section 7.1

#### Addendum

The Covered Bridge on Big Elk Creek is located in Cecil County in the Fair Hill N.R.M.A. It can be reached by following the dirt access road that runs through the Management Area from the entrance on Lewisville Road, that runs east. This bridge is north of Maryland route 273.

The Covered Bridge on Big Elk Creek is in excellent condition after recently being restored. Along with the restoration a wooden fishing pier was added to the north side of the bridge.





CE-238

BIG ELK CREEK COVERED BRIDGE; FAIR HILL N.R.M.A.

CECIL COUNTY, MD

C. MAZUREK

12/97

DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

S.W. ELEVATION



CE-238

Big ELK CREEK COVERED BRIDGE; FAIR HILL N.R.M.A.

CECIL COUNTY, MD

C. MAZUREK

12/97

DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

INTERIOR (FACING EAST)

105 0561 N N N N 92 2





CE-238

Big ELK CREEK COVERED BRIDGE ; FAIR HILL N.R.M.A.

CECIL COUNTY, MD

C. MAZUREK

12/97

DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

N.W. ELEVATION



CE-238

Big ELK Creek Covered Bridge, FAIR Hill N.R.M.A

CECIL COUNTY, MD

C. MAZUREK

12/97

DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

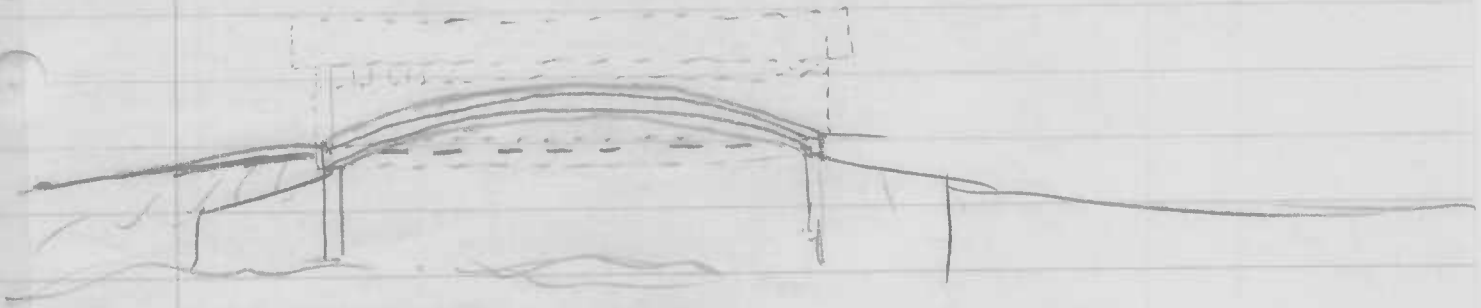
WEST ELEVATION

0802384617

1. STATE <b>Maryland</b>		HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY	
COUNTY <b>Cecil</b>		INVENTORY <b>CE-238</b>	
TOWN <b>Fair Hill</b> VICINITY		2. NAME <b>Covered Bridge on Big Elk Creek</b>	
STREET NO.		DATE OR PERIOD <b>19<sup>th</sup> Century</b>	
ORIGINAL OWNER		STYLE	
ORIGINAL USE <b>Bridge</b>		ARCHITECT	
PRESENT OWNER		BUILDER	
PRESENT USE <b>Bridge</b>		3. FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS USE	
WALL CONSTRUCTION <b>frame</b>			
NO. OF STORIES			
4. NOTABLE FEATURES, HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND DESCRIPTION			
OPEN TO PUBLIC <b>NO</b>			
<p>Courtesy of William Shelton, Mgr.</p> <p>The Big Elk Creek Covered Bridge appears to date from the end of the 19th. Century and is constructed like a large frame barn, with the added segmentally arched span composed of several straight members from which the "building" is supported between the stone buttresses.</p>			
5. PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE			
Endangered <b>NO</b> Interior <b>good</b> Exterior <b>good</b>			
6. LOCATION MAP (Plan Optional)			
7. PHOTOGRAPH			
3. PUBLISHED SOURCES (Author, Title, Pages) INTERVIEWS, RECORDS, PHOTOS, ETC.		9. NAME, ADDRESS AND TITLE OF RECORDER	
Visited and photographed by Michael O. Bourne, 11/12/71		DATE OF RECORD	

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND PHOTOGRAPH MAY BE ADDED ON SHEET OF SAME SIZE

## COVERED BRIDGE over Big Elk Creek.



The Big Elk Creek Covered Bridge appears to date from the end of the 19th Century and is constructed like a large frame barn, with the added segmentally arched span composed of several straight members from which the "building" is supported between the stone buttresses.

MJB

11/15/71

Visited + photographed by MJB 11/12/71

Courtesy of William Shelton, Mgr.

## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Covered Bridge on Big Elk Creek

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

North of Md. Route 273 on Big Elk Creek

CITY, TOWN

Fairhill

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

4th

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Cecil

**3 CLASSIFICATION****CATEGORY**☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☒ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT**OWNERSHIP**☒ PUBLIC☐ PRIVATE☐ BOTH**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED**STATUS**☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS**ACCESSIBLE**☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO**PRESENT USE**☐ AGRICULTURE☐ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☒ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

State of Maryland, Dept. of Natural Resources Telephone #:

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Tawes State Office Building

CITY, TOWN

Annapolis

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Clerk of the Circuit Court

Liber #:

Folio #:

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Cecil County Courthouse

CITY, TOWN

Elkton, Maryland

STATE

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CG-335

### CONDITION

☒ EXCELLENT  
☐ GOOD  
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED  
☐ RUINS  
☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED  
☐ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE  
☐ MOVED      DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

A heavy-timber framed covered bridge spanning Big Elk Creek about one mile north of Maryland Route 273. Most of the structure is mortised and tenoned, the framing technique reminiscent of barn construction. Most timber is rough-hewn, including the segmented arch of six cords which runs from stone abutment to stone abutment, and is connected to the superstructure frame with bolts. Parts of the framing are spliced and bolted together, including the long horizontal beams which span the abutments and support the deck. The side walls rise to within a foot of the roof, leaving a clerestory the length of the bridge on either side. The roof itself is gabled, ridge on the long axis. The gable ends are clapboarded, with a three sided opening above the road and taper to the end posts. There are simple wooden finials at either end of the ridge.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY



# **8 SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)		
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION				

SPECIFIC DATES middle 19th century BUILDER/ARCHITECT \_\_\_\_\_

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

One of the few remaining wooden covered bridges in the state, one of \_\_\_\_\_ remaining in Cecil county. The age of the bridge is uncertain, especially in that it has obviously been shorn and restructured over the years. The barn-style framing is more than would have been necessary to hold up the roof and walls, and may represent the original structure. The corded arch is certainly early, but may have been an attempt to add strength to the structure. The splicings at various points are done with steel bolts and nuts which suggest some relatively recent attempts at rescue. There has been a bridge at this crossing since at least the 1850's. The existence of farmsteads on either side of and adjacent to Big Elk Creek at this crossing since the early 19th century argue for an even earlier date, but the framing techniques of the apparently oldest parts of the bridge are similar to those of the post-bellum period. The bridge is a smaller version of the Gilpin Falls Bridge.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Bourne, M.O., 1971 notes  
 1858 Martenet map  
 1877 Cecil County Atlas

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY \_\_\_\_\_

N/A

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

N/A

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

John D. Hnedak, DOT Survey

1978/79

ORGANIZATION

Maryland Historical Trust

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust  
 The Shaw House, 21 State Circle  
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
 (301) 267-1438

Recommendations:

The bridge is very probably eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, and should be nominated. Its significance is undeniable, and the structure deserves the highest priority for its preservation. No changes whatsoever should be made without first consulting representative of the Maryland Historical Trust.

PENNSYLVANIA  
MARYLAND

5 MASON

AND

4 DIXON

CHESTER CO  
ARCH. CO

3 LINE

DNR-771 MCCLARY HOUSE  
CE-771

BUNTING HOUSE  
CE

DNR-33 SCHOOL HOUSE  
CE-758

DNR-1417 BARN, FEEDMILL

DNR-28 MCMASTER HOUSE  
CE-362

DNR-13 HAY LOFT  
CE-300-C

DNR-04 FINLEY BARN  
CE-301-A

DNR-12 SMOKE HOUSE  
CE-300-13

DNR-47 BARN  
CE-364-A

DNR-45 HOUSE  
CE-364

DNR-03 CARETAKER'S  
HOUSE

DNR-10 BEERS HOUSE  
CE-300-

DNR-50  
NEW COVERED BRIDGE

DNR-02 FINLEY HSE  
CE-301

DNR-11 BEERS BARN  
CE-300-A

DNR-03, 93, TRACK STRUCTURES  
CE-552

DNR-103 CLUB  
CE-75

DNR-01 COVERED  
BRIDGE CE-650

DNR 90-102 TRACK  
STRUCTURES CE-552

DNR-72 HOUSE CE-544

DNR 51 HOUSE

DNR 53 STABLES

DNR 56 STONE HOUSE CE-363

DNR 64 STONE STABLES CE-366

SCOTT MILL DAM

TYSON HOUSE  
CE-527

GAYLEN HOUSE  
CE-517

COVERED BRIDGE  
SITE CE-516

HOUSE RUINS

SCOTT MILL RUINS  
CE

NEWMARK WEST  
QUAD.

CE-238

5863 III NW  
(BAY VIEW)

ANT HILL 1.5 MI.

LITTLE  
ELK

Andora

BM

352

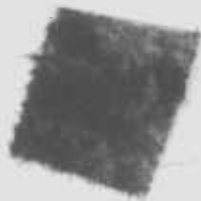
Gramies

Big Elk  
Chapel

Cow

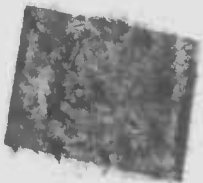


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BIG ELK CREEK COV. BR

HNE DAK



CE- 238





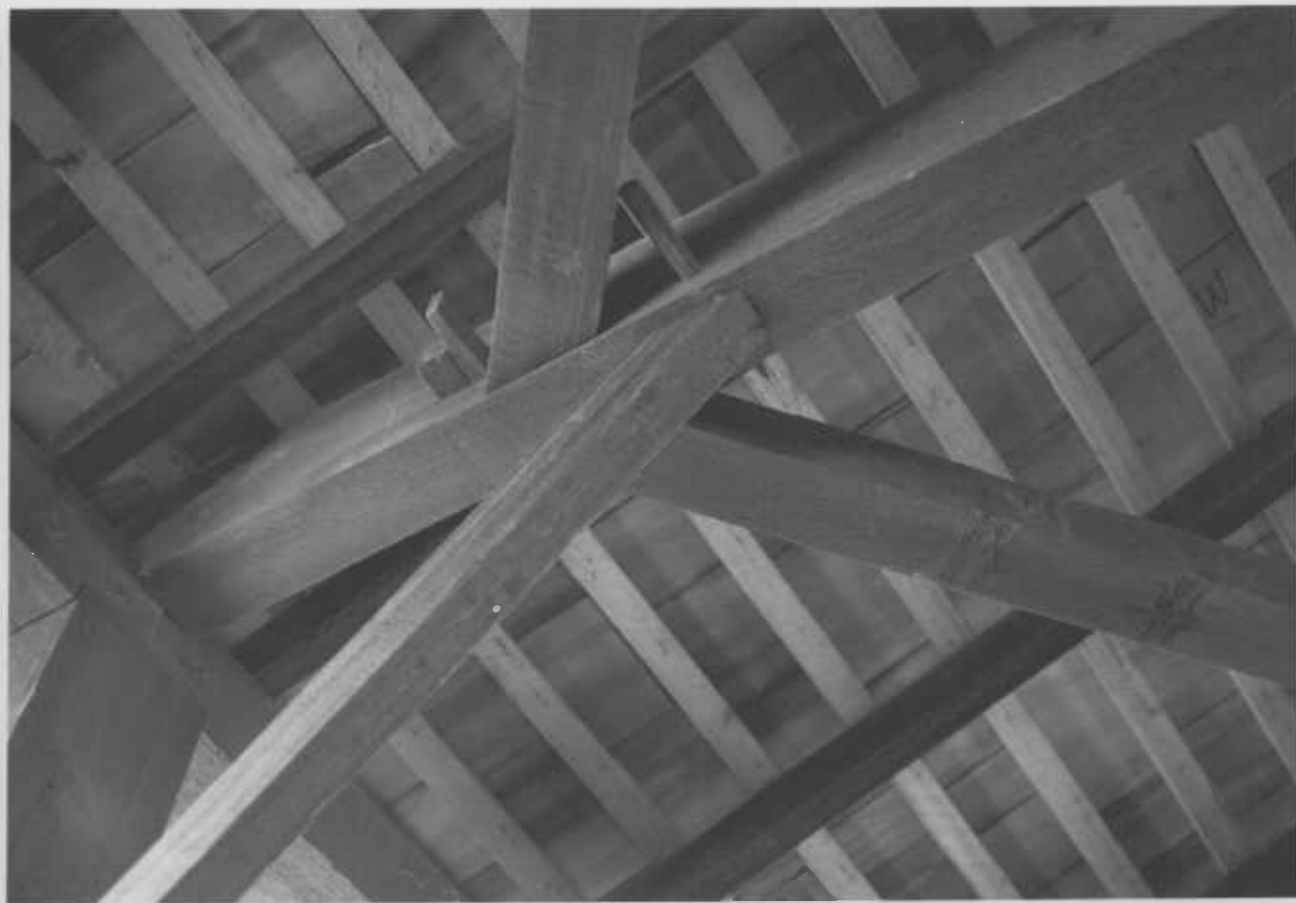
Big Elk Creek Covered Bridge  
CE - 238

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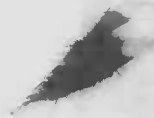


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CE-238



Big Elk Creek Covered Bridge CE -238  
Near Fair Hill  
South Elevation  
MOB/1968  
NEG - MD. Hist. Trust

4